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Message Text

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71/12
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SS-15 AID-20 BNDD-05 CIAE-00 INR-10

IO-13 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SNM-02 SY-10 TRSE-00

USIA-12 NSC-10 SCI-06 OMB-01 IGA-02 DODE-00 L-03

RSR-01 /126 W
---------- 070556
R 270939 Z JUN 73
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6909
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 RANGOON 1494

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - TEXT

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR BM
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS: CASE FOR PROVIDING EQUIPMENT TO GUB

REF: RANGOON 1473

FOR AMBASSADORS GODLEY AND HANDLEY

SUMMARY:

A. GUB HAS REVERTED TO ITS ORIGINAL REQUEST OF APRIL 1972 AS TO TYPE OF EQUIPMENT IT NEEDS FOR NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION EFFORTS. SINCE INSURGENTS AND NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS HAVE BECOME INDISTINGUISHABLE, ONLY MILITARY ACTION -- AS DISTINCT FROM POLICE METHODS EMPLOYED IN OTHER COUNTRIES -- WILL BE EFFECTIVE.

B. EQUIPMENT DESIRED BY GUB IS TANTAMOUNT TO A MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, BUT WITH SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES FROM MOST OTHERS; (A) IT WOULD BE ON MUCH SMALLER SCALE AND (2) ARDENTLY NEUTRALIST GUB WOULD NOT SEEK OR DESIRE
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SECURITY COMMITMENT FROM U. S.

C. EVEN IF USG DECISION IS NEGATIVE, GUB WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE ACTIONS TO BEST OF ITS ABILITY AGAINST KKY AND

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OPIUM SMUGGLERS. BUT LACK OF ADEQUATE TOOLS TO DO THE JOB WILL LIMIT ITS EFFECTIVENESS AND REDUCE PROSPECTS FOR ACHIEVING SUBSTANTIAL RESULTS IN BURMA, WHICH IS WORLD' S LARGEST PRODUCER OF ILLICIT NARCOTICS.

D. ACCORDINGLY, WE RECOMMEND THAT USG AGREE TO PROVIDE 18 HELICOPTERS OR FIXED WING AIRCRAFT OF TYPE REQUESTED BY GUB TOGETHER WITH SPARES, ARMAMENT, ETC AND TO CONSIDER FURTHER ASSISTANCE THEREAFTER DEPENDING ON SUCCESS ACHIEVED. END SUMMARY.

1. AS INDICATED REFTEL GUB HAS GONE BACK TO POSITION IT TOOK LAST YEAR AS TO ITS EQUIPMENT NEEDS FOR SUPPRESSION OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. IN JUNE 1972(V JHREJECTED OUR OFFER OF PORTERS BY TERMINATING NEGOTIATIONS AND STATING IT INTENDED TO PURSUE ANTI- NARCOTICS CAMPAIGN WITH ITS OWN RESOURCES (RANGOON 1510, JUNE 20, 1972). NOW IT HAS AGAIN REJECTED THE PORTERS BY REVERTING TO IT S APRIL 1972 STATEMENT OF NEEDS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT WE ARE NOT REPEAT NOT SIMPLY BACK WHERE WE WERE A YEAR AGO. IN OUR VIEW GUB HAS MUCH STRONGER CASE NOW THAN IT DID FOR ITS REQUEST IN 1972.

2. WHILE WE FULLY RECOGNIZED A YEAR AGO THAT SO LONG AS MAJOR INSURGENCY EXISTED IN BURMA THERE WOULD BE NO BASIC SOLUTION TO NARCOTICS SMUGGLING PROBLEM (RANGOON 919, APRIL 12, 1972) , WE COULD AND DID POINT OUT TO GUB THAT THERE WERE SIGNIFICANT THINGS THAT IT COULD DO WITHIN AREAS OF ITS CONTROL. THESE WERE: (1) TO ELIMINATE REFINERY COMPLEX AT TACHILEK AND (2) TO TAKE EFFECTIVE ACTION AGAINST KKY NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS, ESPECIALLY LO SHING- HAN, WHO WERE ALIGNED WITH GUB ITSELF. GUB HAS TAKEN ACTION WE HAVE URGED. IT HAS DESTROYED TACHILEK REFINERIES AND IT HAS MOVED AGAINST LO HSING- HAN AND OTHER KKY TRAFFICKERS IN DECIIVE FASHION. IN SHARP CONTRAST TO SITUATION A YEAR AGO, THERE ARE NOW NO IMPORTANT NARCOTICS SMUGGLERS OR REFINERIES IN GUB

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CONTROLLED AREAS. ALL MAJOR NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS ARE NOW LINKED WITH ONE GROUP OF INSURGENTS OR ANOTHER. AT THE SAME TIME, ALL MAJOR INSURGENT GROUPS EXCEPT BCP ARE INVOLVED IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. THUS INSURGENTS AND NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS HAVE BECOME VIRTUALLY INDISTIN- GUISHABLE.

3. IT FOLLOWS FROM ABOVE THAT GUB IS QUITE CORRECT IN STATING THAT SUPPRESSION OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AND DESTRUCTION OF REFINERIES ARE NOW PROBLEMS WHICH MUST BE DEALT WITH BY MILITARY MEANS. POLICE METHODS WHICH MAKE SENSE IN COUNTRIES SUCH AS TURKEY WHERE THERE IS NO INSURGENCY AND THE GOVERNMENT CONTROLS ITS TERRITORIES

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ARE NOT EFFECTIVE IN THE BURMESE SITUATION. SINCE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AND INSURGENCY IN BURMA ARE INEXTRICABLY INTERTWINED MILITARY ACTION WHICH DAMAGES ONE ACTIVITY AUTOMATICALLY DAMAGES THE OTHER. WE THUS BELIEVE THAT GUB HAS A GOOD CASE FOR SAYING THAT IT CAN ACHIEVE BEST RESULTS AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICERS BY BEING ABLE TO DEAL MORE EFFECTIVELY ALSO WITH INSURGENTS.

4. AS WE NOW SEE STATE OF PLAY, BALL IS SQUARELY IN U. S. COURT. WE HAVE ASKED GUB TO TELL US FRANKLY WHAT ITS ANTI- NARCOTICS NEEDS ARE AND HOW WE CAN ASSIT. GUB HAS DONE SO. AECLE BURMESE HAVE REVERTED TO THEIR OLD LIST, THEY HAVE (AS INDICATED ABOVE) A BETTER CASE FOR IT TODAY THAN THEY DID BEFORE.

5. THERE IS NO GETTING AROUND FACT THAT WHAT GUB WANTS IS TANTAMOUNT TO MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, BUT WITH SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES FROM MOST OTHERS IN THIS AREA: (A) IT WOULD BE ON A COMPARATIVELY SMALL SCALE, I. E. PERHAPS $30 TO 40 MILLION OVER SEVERAL YEARS; (B) AS BURMA IS AN ARDENTLY NEUTRALIST COUNTRY WHICH HAS ALWAYS FOUGHT ITS BATTLES ALONE IT WOULD NOT LEAD US INTO DANGEROUS SECURITY COMMITMENTS -- PREVIOUS MEDT

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